

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3214

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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EO 11652:LNA

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SUBJECT: CIVAIR: US-MEXICO BILATERAL AIR TRANSPORT NEGOTIATIONS

REF MEXICO 1455,

1. EMBASSY TCO HAS LENGTHY DISCUSSION YESTERDAY WITH MIGUEL GUAJARDO, GENERAL COORDINATOR OF MEXICO'S NATIONAL TOURISM COUNCIL AND A MEMBER OF MEXDEL TO BILATERAL AIR NEGOTIATIONS. HE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWS.

2. USDEL IN ITS OPENING REMARKS AND PRESENTATION OF ROUTE SCHEDULE SHOULD VARY AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE FROM THAT PRESENTED AT CLOSE OF PREVIOUS DEC. 1975 NEGOTIATIONS. THIS WILL ENSURE AN INITIAL BASIC TRANQUILITY TO PAVE WAY FOR A PERSONAL DISCUSSION BETWEEN GOM PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND FORMER PRESIDENT (AND CURRENT HEAD OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM COUNCIL) MIGUEL ALEMAN SOMETIME DURING FIRST FEW DAYS OF NEGOTIATIONS. SURPRISES WOULD DISRUPT THIS MEETING. IF ALEMAN AND ECHEVERRIA ARE UNABLE TO REACH AN UNDERSTANDING AT THAT POINT, THEN THERE WILL BE NO BILATERAL AIR AGREEMENT THIS YEAR. OPTIMUM TIME FOR SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATION WILL BE JUNE 1977, ALLOWING NEW PRESIDENT (UNDOUBTEDLY PRI PARTY CANDIDATE LIC. JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO TIME TO CHOOSE HIS OWN MEN.

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3. GUAJARDO HAS SPOKEN RECENTLY WITH LOPEZ PORTILLO WHO HE SAYS WOULD BE MORE ACCOMMODATING TO USG IN AIR NEGOTIATIONS, IN ORDER TO BOOST US TOURISM TO MEXICO AND IMPROVE MEXICO'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS. (MEXICO 10225, NOV. 19, 1975). NEVERTHELESS HE TOLD GUAJARDO THAT AT THIS POINT HE WAS UNABLE TO INFLUENCE NEGOTIATIONS AT ALL.

4. GUAJARDO ALSO NOTED THAT CURRENT DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION JOSE RODRIGUEZ TORRES WOULD DEFINITELY NOT CARRY OVER INTO THE LOPEZ PORTILLO ADMINISTRATION, AS LOPEZ PORTILLO DOES NOT THINK THAT HIGHLY OF HIM. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT WHO HIS SUCCESSOR WILL BE, IT IS THOUGHT THAT RODRIGUEZ TORRES IS INTERESTED IN A POSITION WITH AEROMEXICO OR MEXICANA. MEANWHILE, IT IS FELT THAT RODRIGUEZ TORRES HAS "NOTHING TO LOSE" IF HE FAILS TO COME UP WITH A NEW AGREEMENT DURING THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS.

5. IN GUAJARDO'S OPINION THE PRIME OPPOSITION TO INCREASED MEXICAN WEST COAST SERVICE BY U.S. AIRLINES IS BY AEROMEXICO AND MEXICANA. HOWEVER, THE POSITION OF THE NATIONAL TOURIST COUNCIL (AND OF THE SECRETARIAT OF TOURISM) IS THAT THIS SERVICE MUST NOW BE OPENED TO U.S. CARRIERS. MEXICANA HAD BEEN GUARANTEED BY THE GOM A THREE-YEAR VIRTUAL MONOPOLY, WHICH EXPIRED A YEAR AGO. INCREASED U.S. SERVICE IS NOW ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF THE MEXICAN WEST COAST TOURIST SPOTS.

6. OPPOSITION TO FURTHER U.S. FIFTH FREEDOM RIGHTS IN MEXICO HAS COME FROM THE CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN CARRIERS THEMSELVES, RATHER THAN THE GOVERNMENTS (ALTHOUGH IN THE CASE OF PERU, OPPOSITION IS FROM THEIR EQUIVALENT OF THE U.S. CAB). THEIR POSITION HAS BEEN THAT IF MEXICO GRANTED FIFTH FREEDOMS, IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS WITH THEIR GOVERNMENTS, THE USG COULD EXERT SUFFICIENT PRESSURE TO GET THE ROUTES AND RIGHTS IT WANTED. THEY VIEW MEXICO AS THE PRIME BARRIER TO THIS DEVELOPMENT. AEROMEXICO AND MEXICANA HAVE ALWAYS, HE FEELS, OPPOSED U.S. FIFTH FREEDOMS IN ORDER TO PREVENT INCREASED U.S. SERVICE TO THE MEXICAN WEST COAST THAT WOULD RESULT FROM A NEW AIR AGREEMENT.

7. WHILE THE NATIONAL TOURIST COUNCIL IS NOT OPPOSING THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ROUTE REQUEST DALLAS/FT. WORTH - MEXICO CITY AND BEYOND, IT PREFERENCES THAT ACAPULCO BE SUBSTITUTED FOR MEXICO CITY. IT WOULD BE "MUCH EASIER" FOR MEXICO, IN VIEW OF THE PRESSURES FROM OTHER CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN AIRLINES, IF BRANIFF COULD USE ACAPULCO INSTEAD OF MEXICO CITY AS ITS MEXICAN INTERCHANGE POINT.

8. THE COUNCIL DOES OPPOSE REMOVING THE MANDATORY MERIDA STOP

FOR PAN AM ON ITS MIAMI-MEXICO CITY ROUTE BECAUSE OF NEED FOR AEROMEXICO TO HAVE AN EXCLUSIVE SERVICE (IN THIS CASE, DIRECT MEXICO CITY - MIAMI), AND POLITICAL PRESSURE FROM THE GOVERNOR OF YUCATAN. ALSO, GUADJARDO FEELS THAT PAN AM HAS DONE VERY LITTLE TO PROMOTE YUCATAN TOURISM AND SHOULD NOT BE REWARDED FOR A POOR JOB BY BEING GRANTED A DIRECT MIAMI- MEXICO CITY ROUTE.

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9. WITH REGARD TO THE SAN FRANCISCO - MEXICO CITY AND BEYOND REQUEST, THE COUNCIL FEELS IT WAS CORRECT TO LINK THIS WITH THE EXISTING HOUSTON - MEXICO CITY AND BEYOND RIGHTS TO INCREASE ITS ACCEPTABILITY AS ONLY A MODIFICATION OF AN EXISTING FIFTH FREEDOM. THIS WOULD HAVE THE ADDED BENEFIT OF AVOIDING LENGTHY CAB HEARINGS AS TO DESIGNATION OF US CARRIER SINCE PAN AM WAS ALREADY DESIGNEE OF CURRENT ROUTE H, AND SERVICE COULD START IMMEDIATELY. WITH THE CON-TERMINAL UNDERSTANDING, THE DIRECT SFO - MEX AND BEYOND IS SUPPORTED BY THE COUNCIL, AS PRESENTED, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT A MEXICAN CARRIER WILL ALSO FLY THE ROUTE.

10. THE ABOVE COVERS THE COUNCIL'S POSITION (AND THAT OF THE TOURISM SECRETARIAT) ON THE FOUR KEY POINTS HIGHLIGHTED DURING THE LAST NEGOTIATIONS. (STATE 287670, DEC. 6, 1975). GUADJARDO NOTED THAT RODRIGUEZ TORRES AGREED TO ACCEPT ONE, BUT THAT HE DID SO WITHOUT PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S AUTHORIZATION,

FOR HE BELIEVED THAT THE USDEL WOULD BE UNABLE TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT ON THAT BASIS.

11. GUAJARDO COVERED OTHER POINTS AS WELL. THE ALBUQUERQUE - EL PASO REQUEST CAN BE ACCEPTABLE ONLY IF IT HAS MANDATORY STOPS ON THE MEXICAN WEST COAST BETWEEN EL PASO AND GUADALAJARA. ALSO, IT CAN NOT GO ON TO MEXICO CITY.
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12. NEW ROUTES COMING INTO MEXICO MUST NOT BE FROM U.S. BORDER CITIES LIKE SAN DIEGO, BUT FROM FURTHER INLAND POINTS LIKE LOS ANGELES.

13. ON MEXICO'S ROUTE Q, THERE REMAINS AN INTEREST IN STRAIGHTENING THIS UP. GUAJARDO IS INTERESTED IN ENSENADA, TIJUANA - LAS VEGAS IN EXCHANGE FOR A U.S. ROUTE FROM LAS VEGAS TO MEXICAN WEST COAST POINTS (BUT NOT DIRECT TO MEXICO CITY, GUADALAJARA OR MONTERREY).

14. THE COUNCIL DOES NOT FAVOR GRANTING PAN AM ANY "SHORT HAUL" ROUTES IN MEXICO AS IT FEELS THAT PAN AM DOES NOT ADEQUATELY PROMOTE SUCH SERVICE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY DIRECTED TO U.S. ROUTE PROPOSAL N, LINKING MIAMI AND TAMPA WITH THE MEXICAN WEST COAST TOURIST POINTS.

15. WHEN ASKED WHAT MEXICO DESIRES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, HE MENTIONED THE FOLLOWING: (1) U.S. SERVICE TO MEXICAN TOURIST POINTS; (2) A MEXICAN CARRIER ON THE ROUTE MEXICO CITY - SAN FRANCISCO; (3) ATLANTA; (4) CHICAGO AND BEYOND TO EUROPE. BEYOND RIGHTS OUT OF ATLANTA ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS BEYOND RIGHT OUT OF CHICAGO. MEXICANA WANTS A BEYOND RIGHT TO EUROPE, BUT CURRENTLY PREFERS A TORONTO AND BEYOND ROUTE. WHILE CANADA WILL PROBABLY GRANT THIS TO MEXICO IN THEIR CONTINUING BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS (MEXICO 10424, NOV. 26, 1975), THIS WILL PROBABLY GO TO AEROMEXICO. (IBERIA IS CURRENTLY OPERATING AEROMEXICO'S BEYOND OUT OF MONTREAL). A CHICAGO BEYOND WOULD SOLVE THIS PROBLEM, IF GIVEN TO MEXICANA (WHICH CURRENTLY OPERATES MEXICO CITY - CHICAGO).

16. IT MUST BE NOTED THAT THE ABOVE ITEMS REPRESENT THE DESIRES OF THE MEXICAN TOURIST INTERESTS, WHICH, AS THE DEPT IS AWARE, HAVE NOT IN RECENT YEARS BEEN FULLY REFLECTED IN THE GOM AVIATION NEGOTIATION POSTURE.
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